

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12

EUR-25 AID-20 DPW-01 RSR-01 (ADP) W

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P 150410 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1677

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8527

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SAIGON INFO TANGIER FROM CAN THO DATED MAY 14
RPTD FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0310

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINT, MARR, CA, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MAY 14, 1973

1. SUMMARY: THE CANADIAN REGION VI ICCS DELEGATE BELIEVES
CANADA WILL CONTINUE ON THE COMMISSION. THE VC HAVE ACTIVATED
ITS FIRST ETHNIC KHMER BATTALION. MR IV COMMANDER MGEN NGHI
REVEALS GENERAL ELECTION PLANS. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: (A) MR IV REPORTED 133 COMMUNIST-
INITIATED INCIDENTS THE MAY 12-13 WEEKEND. SIX GROUND ASSAULTS
OCCURRED, 72 ABF S, 26 HARASSMENTS BY FIRE AND SEVEN ACTS OF
TERRORISM AND SABOTAGE. RVNAF SUFFERED 35 DEAD, 231 WOUNDED
AND FIVE MISSING, AND THE OPPOSITION REPORTEDLY LOST
129 KILLED AND ONE CAPTURED.

(B) CASUALTY FIGURES FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 6-12 REFLECT A SLIGHT
LESSENING OF VIOLENCE IN MR IV. 322 INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED
COMPARED TO 385 THE PREVIOUS WEEK. GOVERNMENT CASUALTIES WERE
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188 KILLED, 723 WOUNDED, AND 31 MISSING. BY COMPARISON, DURING THE HEAVY FIGHTING OF APRIL 29- MAY 5, RVNAF SUFFERED 281 KILLED AND 921 WOUNDED. COMMUNIST LOSSES FOR LAST WEEK WERE 307 KILLED AND FIVE WOUNDED, DOWN SOMEWHAT FROM THE PREVIOUS WEEK'S 353 DEAD.

(C) SIGNIFICANT AMONG LAST WEEK'S TACTICAL DEVELOPMENTS WERE A RISING NUMBER OF SNIPING INCIDENTS ALONG HIGHWAY 4 IN DINH TUONG PROVINCE, AND INCREASED ACTIVITY BY THE VC D-3 REGIMENT ON THE VINH LONG- VINH BINH BORDER.

3. ICCS/ JMC: (A) COL ROBERT SCRETON, REGION VI ICCS CANADIAN DELEGATE, TOLD A VICE CONSUL IN MY THO MAY 8 THAT HE IS CONFIDENT THAT CANADA WILL NOT WITHDRAW FROM THE ICCS AT THE END OF JUNE. HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO RETURN TO OTTAWA FOR SIX MONTHS. COL SCRETON IS ASKING HIS GOVERNMENT TO ROTATE DELEGATES EVERY SIX MONTHS IN ORDER TO BUILD UP A RESERVE OF YOUNG OFFICERS WITH EXPERIENCE IN NEGOTIATING WITH COMMUNISTS. COMMENT: COL SCRETON IS NOT KNOWN TO BE WELL INFORMED ON AMB. GAUVIN'S OR EX- STAFF THINKING.

4. GVN ACTIVITIES: DURING THE MONTHLY TACTICAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY MEETING MAY 11, MG NGUYEN VINH NGHI, THE MR IV COMMANDER, REMINDED PROVINCE CHIEFS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS THAT GENERAL ELECTIONS COULD BE HELD SOMETIME BETWEEN AUGUST AND THE END OF THE YEAR. PREPARING FOR THIS EVENTUALITY WILL BE GIVEN HIGHEST PRIORITY. NGHI ORDERED HIS PROVINCE CHIEFS TO TAKE A NUMBER OF STEPS, INCLUDING INCREASED ATTENTION TO VCI LIQUIDATION; RE-ALLOCATION OF RF/ PF SLOTS TO PROVINCES WITH AN ADEQUATE RECRUITING BASE AND A DIFFICULT SECURITY SITUATION; FURTHER RVNAF POLITICAL TRAINING; COMMAND EMPHASIS ON PSDF AND APPOINTMENT OF PSDF LEADERS; PUNISHMENT OF CORRUPT LOCAL OFFICIALS; AND FURTHER RESETTLEMENT, BY FORCE IF NECESSARY, TO BRING AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE UNDER GVN CONTROL. NGHI ALSO NOTED HE DID NOT INTEND TO WAIT FOR SAIGON TO ASSIGN ADDITIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS TO PROVINCE AND DISTRICT LEVEL. HE INSTRUCTED PROVINCE CHIEFS SET UP MOBILE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAMS UNDER THE COMMAND OF A SENIOR PROVINCIAL CIVIL SERVANT TO STAY FOR TWO WEEK PERIODS IN VILLAGES TO ASSIST THE VILLAGES IN THEIR POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES. IN ADDITION, THE TEAMS WOULD WORK TO REVITALIZE THE INTER- FAMILY GROUP SYSTEM AND TRAIN NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS.

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5. VC ACTIVITY: (A) A VC B-40 KILLED AN ARVN LIEUTENANT COLONEL IN KIEN HOA MAY 10. TWO RF SOLDIERS ALSO DIED AND TWO OTHERS WERE WOUNDED WHEN THE ROCKET HIT THEIR JEEP IN VC- INFESTED TRUC GIANG DISTRICT. THE OFFICER WAS UNDER SECTOR COMMAND AND IN CHARGE OF SECURITY FOR AN ARVN ENGINEERING BATTALION WORKING

ON PROVINCIAL ROUTE 5. THE ENGINEERS, UNDER CONSIDERABLE VC HARASSMENT, ARE TRYING TO IMPROVE THE ROAD TO FACILITATE ARVN OPERATIONS NEAR VC BASE AREA 490.

(B) ACCORDING TO A CHIEU HOI RALLIER INTERVIEWED LAST WEEK IN VINH BINH, THE VC HAVE ACTIVATED THEIR FIRST ETHNIC CAMBODIAN BATTALION. CALLED THE THIRD KHMER BATTALION, THE UNIT BEGAN ORGANIZING JANUARY 28 AND IS NOW OPERATIVE. ACCORDING TO THE RALLIER, WHO WAS FROM THE 501 ST VC BATTALION, THE KHMER OUTFIT WILL CAMPAIGN IN THE TIEU CAN DISTRICT, VINH BINH PROVINCE, A LARGELY CAMBODIAN AREA. ALTHOUGH THE BATTALION REPORTEDLY CONSISTS AT PRESENT OF ONLY FIFTY MEN, IT MAY BE EXPECTED TO DRAW MORE RECRUITS FROM AMONG THE LOCAL POPULATION. INTERESTINGLY, THE VIET CONG CLAIM THE UNIT IS OFFICERED ENTIRELY BY ETHNIC CAMBODIANS. WHERE THEY HAVE FOUND OR INTEND TO FIND KHMER OFFICERS IS NOT CLEAR. NEVERTHELESS AS A PROPAGANDA DEVICE THE PLOY MAY BE EFFECTIVE. NO RVNAF UNIT HAS A COMPLETE COMPLEMENT OF KHMER OFFICERS.

6. SELECTED PROVINCE COMMENT: VINH LONG TERRITORIAL FORCES (TF) HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES IN THE CEASEFIRE PERIOD. WHILE THE VC/ NVA HAVE CONDUCTED COORDINATED AND SUSTAINED ATTACKS IN HONG NGU, DINH TUONG, BA SUYEN- BAC LIEU, AND CHUONG THIEN, THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF FIGHTING IN VINH LONG WHICH WOULD EXPLAIN THE REPORTED VINH LONG TF 142 KIA, 546 WIA, AND 801 DESERTIONS IN THE FIRST SIXTY DAYS OF THE CEASEFIRE. BGEN NGUYEN THANH HOANG, MR IV' S DEPUTY FOR TERRITORIAL FORCES, EXPLAINED THE VINH LONG FIGURES MAY 10 BY SAYING THAT VINH LONG, LIKE A FEW OTHER DELTA PROVINCES, HAD BEEN " RELAXING ON THE RIVIERA FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS" THEREFORE, THEIR TERRITORIAL FORCES WERE NOT PREPARED FOR THE INCREASED ATTACKS BY FIRE EXPERIENCED IN THE CEASEFIRE PERIOD. HE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE DINH TUONG TF HAD BEEN MORE INTENSIVELY ENGAGED WITH THE ENEMY, THEY HAD SUFFERED FEWER CASUALTIES BECAUSE THEY ARE BATTLE- TESTED. DURING THE SAME PERIOD THE FIGURES FOR DINH TUONG TF WERE 86 KIA, 457 WIA, AND 507 DESERTIONS.

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UNQUOTE WHITEHOUSE

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